

"TO CARE FOR HIM WHO HAS BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW AND ORPHANS."

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THE FALL OF RICHMOND

The Last Acts in the Great Drama.

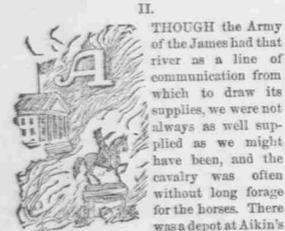
ENTERING THE CITY.

President Lincoln's Visit to the Rebel Capital.

HAILED AS DELIVERER.

Wreck and Ruin Widespread.

BY MAJ.-GEN. AUGUST V. KAUTZ.



THOUGH the Army of the James had that river as a line of communication from which to draw its supplies, we were not always as well supplied as we might have been, and the cavalry was often without long forage for the horses.

WANT OF FORAGE

would not have been so serious if Gen. Ord had taken it into consideration in his management of the cavalry. On the contrary, he generally had more work for us when we were limited in forage than at any other time.

Gen. Ord was very eccentric in all his work, and had an aversion, I sometimes thought to legitimate methods and means. Soon after he took command he issued an order directing that all the ladies that had taken advantage of the opportunity, when the army was lying in Winter quarters, to make a visit to their husbands, to leave the camp at once.

BURIED WITHOUT COFFINS.

He sent for his Quartermaster and inquired the cause of this inhuman practice. The Quartermaster told him that he had no lumber for coffins. The saw-mill from which they had been getting their lumber had, by the order of the General, been turned over to the Engineer Department.

One story more, illustrative of his eccentricity. I was visiting in his quarters once, when my attention was attracted to a singularly-constructed box, and I inquired what it was. He pulled it out from its place and went into an explanation of its object. He said it was a model of a gun he had been trying to perfect. It was triangular in shape, and when taken apart showed a corresponding chamber, which he said was to hold a projectile having the shape of the boomranger, which he thought he could fire over the enemy's intrenchments and be able to make it come back and take him in the rear.

TAKE CARE OF THE RIGHT FLANK

of that army, which I did by supervising the picket-line established, as heretofore stated, along the Darbytown road. It remained the same all the Winter through, and was not interrupted more than twice, and then only for a few hours each time. It was arduous and fatiguing duty, the men sitting for two hours, no matter what the character of the weather,



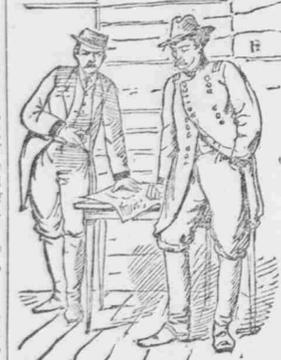
USED-UP CAVALRY.

on their horses too far apart to be of any help to each other, yet in sight, so as to be able to report the capture or attack of a picket on the right or left. The pickets went on by regiments for 24 hours, and seldom had more than two days off before the regiment went on again. The most interesting feature of it was receiving the deserters and refugees, white and black, that found our line the most convenient to come in on, for they came in in greater numbers on it than on any other position of the army; sometimes as many as 30 per day. They were usually brought in by men who had adopted the business, for so much per head. The usual amount was \$500 in Confederate money. There was a colored woman brought in one day, of whom I asked the question what she had to pay to the men who brought her through, and her reply was that she offered them \$500 in Confederate money or \$7.50 in silver, and they took the silver.

CONFINED IN CASTLE THUNDER.

Two of these men, named Smith and Spencer, belonged to Hampton's Legion, and they carried on a flourishing business for some time, but they were finally captured, and the last I heard of them they were

SHERIDAN AND WARREN.



SHERIDAN AND WARREN.

as soon as the Army of the Potomac made another effort to extend its left, the already-attenuated Confederate line

MUST BREAK SOMEWHERE.

Lee's army was only half the strength of Grant's, but, holding an inner and much shorter line, had been able to present a front that the Union forces could not penetrate up to this time. But Lee's forces were wasting and Grant's were receiving accessions that would enable it to stretch out more; and the former must break if it attempted to do the same thing. This was what really took place, for it was the front that was presented to Sheridan at Five Forks on the 1st of April that justified the assault of the Army of the Potomac on the Petersburg line on the 23d, and enabled the army to realize the success for which it had labored so long.

UPRISING OF THE BABIES.



Spokesman of the Veterans' Orphans: "See here, Col. Matson, we are awfully tired of pinching along on your skim-milk allowance of \$2 a month. That's less'n seven cents a day. Do you suppose any sort of a child can be kept in bread and butter, cakes and molasses, shoes and stockings, clothes and school books, to say nothing of dolls and baseballs, on seven cents a day? We are astonished at you. Didn't the country promise our papas to do better than that for us?"

was seen of the rebel Capital in the first campaign, led me to the belief that when we should finally get in I would be there to participate in the event. As this really occurred and was brought about in a way that forced all the conditions thereof upon me against my will, it would seem to have had a fatality about it.

I returned from a 10-day's leave of absence, which I had obtained from Gen. Grant, against the inclination of Gen. Ord, in the latter part of March to find myself relieved from the command of the cavalry. This was the CULMINATION of GEN. ORD'S DISSATISFACTION with my management of the cavalry. He informed me that I was to command the First Division of the Twenty-fifth Corps. I am quite sure that the General expected me to decline the command of colored troops. While I was greatly disappointed, and felt much injured, I was too well satisfied of the near termination of the war to have declined any command so long as I could have no other. I could not make any issue, for personal grievances could not command any attention in those exciting times, and no man was so valuable that he could not be dispensed with. I had witnessed many official depreciations of higher rank and greater reputation than I had been able to achieve, and the world moved on all the same. Gen. Butler had been removed at a time when he deemed himself most secure, and I am sure that if the war had lasted long enough Gen. Ord would have met with his setback also.

I had organized the Cavalry Division of the Army of the James and made it what it was, and it had served me faithfully, and I had nurtured and taken care of it and tried to prepare it for the final event of the war. In doing so I was considered to be antagonizing the army commander, and he caused me to be superseded in the command of it by Gen. Mackenzie, who was also impressed with the risk of taking a new command on the verge of a campaign. More than one disaster is attributable to this cause, and innumerable failures to accomplish an allotted task during the war attest the lack of wisdom in making an important change at such a time.

I reported from my leave on the 24th of March, and did not get my order officially until after the 25th, the date of the order; but, acting under verbal orders, I was doing all I could to inform myself with regard to the new command to which I had been assigned. It was a great change, for the First Division, Twenty-fifth Corps, mustered about 7,000 men present for duty out of 13,000 on the rolls. The conditions are so different for the two arms of service that I would have had very grave apprehensions if I had anticipated a battle very soon. But the program was already out, and I was confirmed in my belief as to what would take place by the events that followed.

On the 29th, PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND GEN. GRANT attended a review of the Army of the James in part, and inspected the lines in its immediate front. After the review it was made known to the general officers that they were assembled at Gen. Devens's headquarters that the campaign would begin at once by extending the left of the Army of the Potomac, and Gen. Weitzel was informed that he would be left, with Kautz's and Devens's Divisions, in charge of the position of the Army of the James on the north bank of the river. As soon as I knew the plan I congratulated Gen. Weitzel on the prospect we had of going into Richmond in less than 10 days without a fight. He shook his head in a doubtful way, and said he hoped I was right in my predictions. The next day the movement began. I have shown the opportunities I had for forming the belief that Richmond would be evacuated so soon.

On the 29th the rain commenced and continued for several days, and the troops engaged in the movement were soon mired and bogged to a stand on the left by a cause that has defeated many an army. Sheridan's advance under Crook had been checked at Dinwiddie Courthouse, and the various commanders of the Army of the Potomac, becoming discouraged, were urging Grant to suspend the movement and await the arrival of Sherman, who was then moving up in North Carolina, and perhaps not more than 100 miles away. At this juncture Gen. Rawlins sent for Gen. Sheridan, who came and spent the greater portion of the night of the 30th discussing the situation with Gen. Grant. Sheridan was for going

see the effects of the fire and to see the Capitol grounds. I remember Mr. Lincoln's nervousness, as the wagon turned the southeast corner of the Capitol building where the road ran very close to the steep declivity on his side and made him shrink and seize the back of the seat in front of him as we whirled swiftly around the corner, in evident fear that we might go over the bank. Some of us had other apprehensions, that were fully justified by the fact that only 10 days thereafter the assassin's bullet terminated his illustrious career in a public theater in Washington.

RESTORATION OF VIRGINIA

to the Union, living during this time on the gunboat Malvern, and meeting the parties to the scheme on the boat or at Gen. Weitzel's quarters. Some preliminary steps were taken to have the Legislature assemble to rescind the act of secession, but as soon as the news of it reached Washington it met with the opposition of Mr. Stanton and was never heard of again.

While we were taking peaceable possession of the Capital of the Confederacy the events which enabled us to do so were being enacted to the west of Petersburg. Gen. Lee, if he desired to get away with any portion of his army, made a fatal mistake in not retreating by the south side of the Appomattox. By taking the north side he gave the Union army the shorter line, and enabled Grant to head him off. The telegraph kept us informed of the most important events of the chase after Lee's army, and when on the 9th we received the news of the surrender of Appomattox Courthouse it was announced to the commands in Richmond by Gen. Weitzel by a hundred guns.

Although I can add nothing to history regarding the Appomattox campaign, because I was not in it, I derived certain impressions with regard to it from those who were, for we were camped near Petersburg when the victorious troops returned to that point, and I heard the details of the pursuit and surrender from their lips when fresh from the field. From all I heard at that time I was convinced that the personal presence of Sheridan had more to do with the speed and entire completeness of the pursuit and capture of the rebel army than that of any other man in it. When one remembers the opportunities lost at Antietam and at Gettysburg, it was easy for me to believe that if Sheridan had not led off in the chase Grant might have yielded to the plea of "worn out and exhausted" that always comes up in trying times, and gone into Richmond to enjoy the rest and the triumph of his capture in the rebel Capital, which was the disposition of the army; and would any other General's urgent dispatches to "come on, we will catch him tomorrow or next day," have had the same influence with Grant that Sheridan's had? Can it be doubted that if the energetic pursuit of Lee had not been made, that the greater portion with John, and in that event that the war would have lasted six months longer at a cost of a thousand millions? Was there another man in that army who would have led off as Sheridan did, or that Grant would have supported as he did Sheridan? Does the country appreciate the services of Sheridan rendered in this short campaign, not to mention those of the Shenandoah? I ask this question for the reason that Congress has been permitted to shut off from further advancement the man to whom the country is so greatly indebted, by abolishing the grade of General, which was created for him who was modest enough to say that as a military genius Sheridan was his superior.

These are candid convictions to the disparagement of none of the brilliant records that were made by the leaders of the Army of the Potomac. The Nation would only be doing honor to itself to recognize the great services he has rendered by conferring the grade of "General" upon Sheridan. It is difficult to understand the national illiberality that prevents it from being done, for it would be a still greater reflection upon a country which is embarrassed with the plethora of its Treasury, to attribute its failure to do this to the mite of increased pay the advancement would justly carry with it, when it is remembered how many millions he has undoubtedly saved to the country. Whatever may be thought of Sheridan's administration of the army in time of peace since the war, his superiority as a commander in the field was fully demonstrated by what he did and the part he performed in the greatest war of modern times.

Although I have not tried to write a history of the fall of Richmond, I hope I have contributed a few facts that will give greater interest to the many readers of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE that participated in the events of the period covered by the limited sketch of the culminating event of the great war for the preservation of the Union.

SPRING WINDS.

[Good Words.] I heard the winds with unseen feet Pass up the long and wavy street; They sang, "We come from hill and glen To touch the brows of toiling men, "That each may know and feel we bring The first faint breathings of the Spring; "To sweeten lane, and street, and square, And lighten all the dusty air. "The long, deep plough and woodland lie In sodden sludges to the eye. "The birds have caught a finer note To throbb with joy each feathered throat. "The liquid pulsings of the year; "And everywhere you look is seen Life dawning in a lineage of green. Thus sang the winds as up the street They passed with heed, but unseen feet. And, as they went, a cloud above Sent downward tears of spring and love.

CARELESSNESS ALL AROUND.

People cannot be too careful about whom they send on errands to drug stores. A lady in New York, a day or so since, sent a medicine bottle to be filled. She gave it to a colored man who did errands about the house, with the necessary directions as to filling it. The negro went to a drug store and between little snatches sang to the druggist that he wanted the bottle filled. "With what?" asked the druggist. "Oh! bug poison. Give me a quarter's worth." The clerk mixed a pint and a half of corrosive sublimate, carbolic acid, alcohol and water and pasted half a dozen poison labels on the bottle. The negro took it home and gave it to his mistress, who, without looking at the bottle, took a large dose of the medicine. Fortunately antidotes were given in time to save her life, but it was a very close call. The negro, when taken to task, owned up that he "did not think." Bug poison was nearer his level than mineral water, and having a bottle and a quarter, he just asked for it.

A Spy in Dixie.

Service Under the Shadow of the Hangman's Noose.

THE DECOY LETTER.

Picket Duty on the Frozen Rappahannock.

HOME ON FURLOUGH.

How Telegraphic Messages Were Sent From a Balloon.

(GOVERNMENT, 1861.)

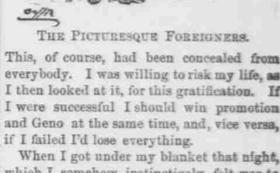


FTER I had left Gen. Burnside's staff officer that evening, I sat down to think over the plans he had indicated to me.

I will admit right here that I was a little bit cowardly about making this leap in the dark. When the time came to make the jump I was very much like the little boy as play who has agreed to follow his big leader over a dangerous place—I hesitated, and the more I hesitated the more scared I became. I am not ashamed to write down here in plain black and white that I was afraid to again put myself in the rebels' hands.

It is all very well now to talk about such things being safe enough, but as a matter of fact it was not safe, more especially to me, to take any such risks. Gen. Burnside in consenting to the undertaking probably went on the general military maxim not to hesitate to sacrifice one life to secure the safety of two or more.

As will be understood, the prime motive with me was my longing desire to see Gen.



THE PICTUREQUE FOREIGNERS.

This, of course, had been concealed from everybody. I was willing to risk my life, as I then looked at it, for this gratification. If I were successful I should win promotion and Gen. Ord at the same time, and, vice versa, if I failed I'd lose everything.

When I got under my blanket that night, which I somehow instinctively felt was to be the last time under the protection of the old flag, I had the chance to calmly and dispassionately think over the entire matter. I recalled with feelings of intense gratification the staff officer's words: "We shall cross over to the town again as we did before."

It occurred to my dull comprehension that if this were to be so, would the use in my making any risk on myself to find Gen. Ord by going over below town, in advance of the army. I reasoned very clearly the longer I thought of it, that it would be safer, and in every way better answer my purpose of seeing Gen. Ord, to accompany the whole army over the pontoons under the protection of our cannon, than it would to go over alone a day or two in advance, and take the risk of not seeing her.

CONCILIATING THE REBEL PICKET.

self; but he didn't suspect it, and neither did I, at the time he was talking. I had agreed with him that I would go. I had made all my preparations and had been at a good deal of trouble to arrange signals, etc. I could not, therefore, deliberately back out of it. I was a coward both ways, because I was afraid to go and I was afraid not to go. I concluded, by way of compromise, to do as a great many Generals have done who were also afraid sometimes—I would procrastinate, in hopes the army would move, and if I was compelled to move first I would make a "demonstration" below town, but I would watch my chances and cross with



LINCOLN IN THE STREETS OF RICHMOND.

that completely excluded the sunlight that shone so bright before we entered the city, and the ascending heat created currents of air that swept around us with a force that pertains only to the severest storms, covering the walks and paths of the Capitol Square with several inches of slanders. A few rods in front of us stood the equestrian statue of Washington, with right arm extended and pointing to the southwest. It was an occasion and the scene was one that would readily suggest that the spirit of him whom the statue commemorated was for the route that Lee had taken.

MR. LINCOLN CAME UP IN THE STEAMER

Malvern, one of the gunboats, from City Point, his presence being made known to me by the crowd of negroes that was following him from the landing, leading his little son Tad, accompanied by Admiral Porter. Having become acquainted with the distinguished party a few days before at a review on the Petersburg front, I recognized the purport of the visit, and joined the party, who were glad to meet some one they knew to show them the way to Gen. Weitzel's quarters, which was located for the time in the house so recently vacated by the Confederate President. An impromptu reception of the representative men of the immense crowd of blacks that filled the street was held by the great emancipator then and there, in the house that only two days before was the home of the chief of the slave power.

Gen. Weitzel and myself and several other officers accompanied the President in some spring-wagons in a drive through the city to